

# NEWS RELEASE

## INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (IURC)

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**IURC Hosting Free Safe Dig Events as Dig Season Nears**

*Safety Training to be Held in 7 Communities Across Indiana in March and April*

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC or Commission) today announced it will host seven underground utility Safety Days across Indiana this spring. Safety Days are designed to educate participants on the Indiana 811 law and 811 system and will include both classroom-style segments and a live, mock gas line-strike demonstration with emergency response to show the dangers of a gas line damage. The fourth annual Safety Days, which are aimed at those involved in utility safety, including excavators, utility employees, locators, and emergency response professionals, will be held in the following communities this year: Columbus, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Noblesville, Schererville, Scottsburg, and South Bend.

“Our annual Safety Days are aimed at encouraging safe digging practices to excavators, utility employees, locators, and others who live and work all around the state,” said Chairman Jim Huston. “As we near the start of the dig season, these Safety Days, as well as the Commission’s free online Safe Dig Indiana training, can be valuable resources in learning about and understanding Indiana’s 811 law and its importance in keeping Hoosiers safe.”

More information about the events, including the link to register, specific locations, and general agenda for each day, can be found at [www.IndianaSafetyDay.com](http://www.IndianaSafetyDay.com).

Those who are unable to attend or would like more information about the Indiana 811 law can visit [www.SafeDigIndiana.com](http://www.SafeDigIndiana.com) to access the Commission’s free, online safety training system for professionals who work in excavation, including, but not limited to, landscapers, plumbers, concrete workers, and heavy construction workers. The training courses are open to any individual wanting to learn more about the Indiana 811 law and how it can help keep their communities safe.

Funds for the Safety Days and online training system were allocated from the Underground Plant Protection Account (UPPA), which itself is funded through the penalties assessed to excavators and gas line operators who violate Indiana’s 811 law. Per Indiana Code § 8-1-26-24, funds from UPPA may only be allocated to improve the safety of Indiana’s underground plant resources through:

- Public awareness programs concerning underground plant protection;
- Training and educational programs for contractors, excavators, locators, operators, and other persons involved in underground plant protection; and

- Incentive programs for contractors, excavators, locators, operators, and other persons involved in underground plant protection to reduce the number of violations

More information about the UPPA can be found [here](#), and more information about Indiana's 811 law can be found [here](#).

Underground utilities may carry explosive gases, powerful electrical charges, critical data from hospitals and emergency service providers, high pressure water, and other products that, if damaged during excavation activities, can have serious, and in some cases deadly, consequences. Protecting these resources by properly training those who work near them protects the public and the excavator from serious injury or even death. Damages to utility lines are prevalent across the country – each year in Indiana alone, more than 2,000 natural gas lines are damaged.

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The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (Commission) is a fact-finding body that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. An advocate of neither the public nor the utilities, the Commission is required by state statute to make decisions that balance the interests of all parties to ensure the utilities provide safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. The Commission also serves as a resource to the legislature, executive branch, state agencies, and the public by providing information regarding Indiana's utilities and the regulatory process. In addition, Commission members and staff are actively involved with regional, national, and federal organizations regarding utilities issues affecting Indiana. For more information, please visit [www.in.gov/iurc](http://www.in.gov/iurc).